

PROPOSAL FOR A
GEOPHYSICAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE OF THE PACIFIC

The United States now occupies a dominant position in the Pacific Ocean area. With this go certain important responsibilities of a scientific nature. For mere existence, as well as intelligent development of the Pacific area, it is necessary that the known facts of geophysical sciences be taken into account, and that research be energetically conducted with a view to expanding our field of knowledge in those sciences in that particular area. These geophysical sciences include meteorology, oceanography, seismology, volcanology, geodesy, hydrology, and terrestrial magnetism and electricity. Accordingly, they govern the observation and study of weather, climate, ocean currents and depths, tidal waves, earthquakes, volcanoes, precise measurements of distances, and water supply.

Under the prewar pattern of scientific organizations, a coherent attack on these problems would not be possible, and it is unlikely that anything approaching satisfactory results could be obtained for several generations. In view of the importance to our national interest and security, I therefore propose the establishment of a central institute with some such title as Geophysical Research Institute of the Pacific, federally financed, for the purpose of directing and integrating

geophysical research in the Pacific Ocean area.

As a sample only of the sort of thing I have in mind, I feel that the most effective organization would consist of:

(a) a laboratory and administrative center at Harvard University where instruments could be developed for the making of measurements in these sciences and results of the observational and experimental program could be studied. It would be imperative that full cooperation be sought from all universities of the country and other organizations, such as oceanographic institutes, now in existence.

(b) about five central areal observatories located, say, at the Hawaiian Islands, Guam, Okinawa or the Philippines, the Aleutians or Alaska, and the Samoan Islands. Each of these could control within its area any subsidiary observing points required by the various sciences.

Exclusive of capital outlay for buildings, it seems likely that a very productive program could be maintained on a budget in the vicinity of a half million dollars per year.

With a properly planned network of base stations strategically located in the Pacific area, data could be assembled that would provide extremely valuable

information for the development of aviation, surface navigation, mineral and agricultural resources, - in fact everything basic to the occupancy and desirable development of the region.

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